

Message Text

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16

ACTION EB-11

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ISO-00 CAB-09 CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00

DOT-00 INR-11 NSAE-00 RSC-01 FAA-00 SS-20 L-03 SCS-03

SCA-01 PA-04 PRS-01 USIA-15 OPR-02 DRC-01 /093 W

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R 041700Z SEP 74

FM AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9206

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAIR, CG

SUBJECT: PANAM TAP TEAM'S PROBLEMS

1. PAN AMERICAN TAP TEAM CURRENTLY IN SOME DIFFICULTY AS RESULT OF SEVERAL UNFORTNATE LAPSES CULIMINATING IN INCIDENT AT NJILI AUGUST 31 WHEN SOME 300 STRANDED PASSENGERS NEARLY RIOTED ON THE TARMAC. POTENTIALLY NASTY SITUATION AVERTED WHEN COMMISSAIRE D'ETAT EKETEBI ARRIVED ON SCENE, PROMISED EARLY TRANSPORT AND ENTICED CROWD BACK INTO TERMINAL. INCIDENT WAS FILMED AND CARRIED ON TV SAME EVENING.

2. EKETEBI, PRESUMABLY ACTING ON MOBUTU'S ORDERS, INFORMED LOCAL PANAM REP FOLLOWING DAY THAT ONE MORE INCIDENT OF THIS NATURE WOULD FORCE EKETEBI TO TAKE PERSONAL CONTROL OF AIRZAIRE.

3. AIR ZAIRE DIRGEN HUTT HAS DRAFTED LETTER TO EKETEBI EXPLAINING EVENTS WHICH LED TO ACCUMULATION OF PASSENGERS (NOT ALL OF WHICH WERE AIR ZAIRE'S FAULT) AND PROPOSING MORE FREQUENT MEETINGS TO DISCUSS AIR ZAIRE PROBLEMS WITH HIM. HE WILL SEEK TO DELIVER IT IN PERSON. EKETEBI'S CHEF DE CABINET HAS INFORMED HUTT TAP CONTRACT WILL NOT BE CANCELLED BUT HUTT'S TWO ZAIRIAN DEPUTIES WILL BE SUSPENDED. HUTT'S

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EXPLANATION HAS ALSO BEEN FORWARDED TO VP ERSKINE

RICE IN NEW YORK.

COMMENT: IT IS UNFORTUNATE THIS INCIDENT OCCURRED ONLY THREE MONTHS AFTER HUTT TOOK OVER AS DIRGEN SINCE HE HAS SUCCEEDED IN ESTABLISHING EFFECTIVE WORKING RELATIONSHIP WITH EKETEBI. WE ASSUME MATTERS WILL SETTLE DOWN AND COUNSELED RESTRAINT WHEN HUTT ORIGINALLY PROPOSED COUNTER ATTACK BY GIVING EKETEBI STRONGLY WRITTEN CATALOG OF AIR ZAIRE'S DEFICIENCIES. EMBASSY INCLINED DISCOUNT EKETEBI'S THREAT. GIVEN LACK OF EXPERIENCED PERSONNEL THROUGHOUT THE AIRLINE, THERE WILL BE INCIDENTS IN THE FUTURE. AS OF NOW, THERE ARE APPARENTLY NO STRONG COMPETITORS EAGER TO TAKE OVER HEADACHES OF RUNNING AIR ZAIRE. HINTON

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: CIVIL DISORDERS, AIRPORTS, AIRLINES, ORGANIZATION & MANAGEMENT
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 04 SEP 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: shawdg
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974KINSHA07549
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740246-0005
From: KINSHASA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740977/aaaacmso.tel
Line Count: 75
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EB
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: shawdg
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 17 JUL 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <17 JUL 2002 by kelleyw0>; APPROVED <27 FEB 2003 by shawdg>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PANAM TAP TEAM'S PROBLEMS
TAGS: EAIR, CG, PANAM, AIR ZAIRE, (HUTT), (EKETEBI)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005